

APPROVED: Meeting No. 16-92

ATTEST: *Sharon A. Dean*

MAYOR AND COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND
Meeting No. 13-92

April 6, 1992

The Mayor and Council of Rockville, Maryland, convened in Worksession in the Council Chamber, Rockville City Hall, 111 Maryland Avenue, Rockville, Maryland, on April 6, 1992, at 7:00 p.m.

PRESENT

Mayor Douglas M. Duncan

Councilmember James F. Coyle

Councilmember Rose G. Krasnow

Councilmember James T. Marrinan

Councilmember David Robbins

In attendance: Assistant City Manager Rick Kuckkahn and City Clerk Sharon Gran.

Re: Worksession with Landlord-Tenant Affairs Commission

Mary Vaarwerk, Chairperson, and Commission members Marylin Pierre and Donald

Wallesz discussed the following with the Mayor and Council:

Tax Duplication Program

With respect to the City's landlord-tenant operation, Ms. Vaarwerk noted that it is a quick and effective service and superior to that provided by Montgomery County. Thus, the Commission feels strongly that the status quo should be maintained.

During FY91, 258 inquiries were received by the City's Landlord-Tenant Office, 178 of which were from tenants and 83 from landlords; 25 inquiries evolved into formal complaints that were mediated by the Landlord-Tenant Office.

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Mayor Duncan asked if the City's landlord-tenant costs are being recovered through fees. The fees, which have not been revised since 1984, do cover the operating costs of the landlord-tenant office but the inspection costs are not fully recaptured.

Discussion followed regarding the number of licensed single-family homes in the City, and it was noted that the typical complaint received from tenants involves disputes concerning return of the security deposit.

Mayor Duncan requested the Commission to review the licensing fees and make recommendations to the Mayor and Council for adjustments.

Re: Worksession with Economic
Development Council

Robert Bender, Chairperson, and EDC members Craig Falk, James Farrell, Helen Hillstrom and Harriet Margolis discussed the following with the Mayor and Council:

EDC Review of Economic Development Plan

Mr. Bender reported that the EDC is in the process of mailing the plan to representatives of the business community, with a particular emphasis on minority businesses. Feedback is expected to be received by the end of April.

Councilmember Coyle voiced his disappointment with the plan as he feels it fails to delineate how the City should be responding to the support needs of businesses. Rather, the plan sets forth a statistical framework of the current economic situation.

It was pointed out that this is a first stage working draft which was intended to provide background information and that the second draft should include the strategies referred to by Councilmember Coyle.

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Economic Resource Profile for Rockville

The EDC recommends that an Economic Resource Profile for Rockville be obtained from U.S. Impressions, Inc. This is a custom magazine which can be used to promote Rockville as a viable economic entity. The magazine will be printed at no cost to the City. The firm will cover all costs of production by selling advertising in the business community.

Mr. Bender advised that the Chamber of Commerce had been asked for feedback and both the President and Executive Director feel that such a publication would be in direct competition with the Chamber's Community Guide.

U.S. Impressions, Inc. would hire locally for copywriters, photographers, etc., and the EDC recommends proceeding with this project. The Mayor and Council agreed and requested that the timing of the release of this publication be coordinated with the Rockville Chamber of Commerce's Community Guide.

Small Business Forum

The EDC is planning a small business forum on franchising and is putting together a panel of experts in this area.

Minority Business Development/Future EDC Activities

Mayor Duncan noted that earlier there had been discussions regarding a minority women business roundtable, and it was agreed that the EDC would follow-up on this as well as the Small Business Roundtable.

With respect to incubator business opportunities, Craig Falk noted that they had been unsuccessful in locating space for the incubator businesses as well as seed capital funding.

Councilmember Coyle raised the issue of international export businesses, and it was

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agreed that this would be a good topic for a future forum. Bernie Fitzgerald, staff liaison, will also follow-up with the State of Maryland on this issue.

Inasmuch as positive feedback has been received regarding the Business Site Visit program, it was agreed that it would be continued on a quarterly basis.

Other

Mr. Falk invited the Mayor and Council to attend a rally to be held on Saturday, April 11, the purpose of which is to persuade the County to retain the Twinbrook Library.

Re: Worksession with Housing
Authority Board of
Commissioners

Ardell Hilliard, Chairperson, and Sandra Crewe, Executive Director, discussed the following with the Mayor and Council:

Current Profile of RHA Residents

Sixty-five percent of the residents are employed, 15% are receiving Social Security benefits and 15% are receiving AFDC. There has been a dramatic increase in dual and male heads of household.

Four hundred and fifty applications have been received for housing since July 1991 for the 162 units, only 30-40 of which become available during the year.

Budget Update

A \$20,000-\$30,000 budget shortfall is anticipated as a result of cuts by the County and State in AFDC benefits and escalating rent delinquencies resulting from unemployment. A maintenance position has been eliminated to offset this shortfall.

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Other suggestions for coping with the shortfall include prorating the Executive Director's salary to the grants and returning the PILOT money to the Housing Authority to reduce the deficit.

Beginning fiscal year 93, the City will begin refuse and recycling pick-ups at the projects.

Section 8 Program

The Rockville Housing Authority is currently paying the Housing Opportunities Commission over \$5,000 per year in vouchers because the HOC is allowed to operate in the City. The Housing Authority Board of Commissioners was requested to review this situation and make a recommendation to the Mayor and Council.

Status of Development Projects

There are currently 18 scattered sites and an application is pending for an additional ten sites. Four of the 10 are under contract, and the price range is \$85,000-\$110,000. Attempts to get HUD to raise their current ceilings (\$83,000 for two bedrooms and \$102,000 for three bedrooms) will continue.

Although the application submitted last year to HUD with respect to the Park Terrace apartments was not approved, the Housing Authority will resubmit the application.

Other

Efforts to secure air conditioning will also continue as this is a priority of residents.

Re: Worksession with Human
Rights Commission

Carol Hannaford, Chairperson, and Commission members Maura Bowen, Walter Davis, Robert Dorsey, Stephanie Ferguson, Mayo Robertson, Joy Stein, Frances Vaughan and Lloyd Welter discussed the following with the Mayor and Council:

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Tax Duplication Program

Concern was expressed regarding possible cutbacks in the human rights area. Mayor Duncan stated that this arose out of discussions with Montgomery County regarding their proposal to reduce the tax duplication funds owed to the City of Rockville. The City is reviewing ways to cut back on our costs which exceed the reimbursement received from the County.

It was noted that the City does more outreach and follow-up, and staff will report back to the County as to the services the City is providing.

Ordinance Amendments

The Commission has reviewed the City's ordinance and is in the process of making recommendations for revision. Particular emphasis will be placed on conformance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and other issues emanating from the Commission's retreat held last November.

Other

Councilmember Coyle asked if more complaints had been received as a result of the economy. Although there are more preliminary intakes primarily as a result of layoffs, staff advised that there is no substantial increase in cases.

Mayor Duncan requested that the Commission prepare an annual plan of outreach efforts. Additionally, he requested that the Commission prepare guidelines for responding to incidents of hate/violence and procedures/recommendations for minimizing such incidents.

Re: Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Mayor and Council, the meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m., to convene again in General Session at 7:30 p.m. on April 13, 1992, or at the call of the Mayor.